



The experiential pleasure of food: A savoring journey to food well-being

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ABSTRACT

This paper introduces experiential pleasure of food (EPF) as a journey that involves the enduring cognitive and emotional pleasure consumers gain from savoring the multisensory, communal, and cultural meanings of food experiences. Specifically, our paper extends work by Cornil and Chandon (2016a and 2016b) on epicurean eating pleasure (EEP) and identifies and defines three stages (contemplation, connection, and creation) and its determinants as they lead to consumers' food well-being (Block et al., 2011). EPF (vs. EEP) aims to promote enduring (vs. improved) consumer well-being and explores marketing and public policy implications and future research areas that might help achieve food well-being (FWB) (Block et al., 2011). EPF offers a clear path to connect pleasure and EEP with FWB. Specifically, our conceptualization of EPF will serve scholars, public policymakers, and marketers who are interested in understanding enduring healthy eating through the perspective of food as pleasure rather than as a health deterrent.

1. Introduction

The sacrifice of pleasure for the sake of long-term health has characterized healthy food decisions for decades. Consumers are encouraged by food researchers, nutritionists, and the media to exercise restraint; they are to resist the siren call of tempting foods by averting attention away from bodily states (e.g., hunger, arousal, salivation) and sensory information in order to focus on health-related goals (Yang et al., 2012). Further adding to their feelings of sacrifice and gloom, consumers judge foods with healthy messaging as less palatable and enjoyable (Liem, Aydin, & Zandstra, 2012; Raghunathan, Naylor, & Hoyer, 2006). Food pleasure is typified as fleeting and rebellious, being a simplistic hedonic satisfaction resulting from indulging visceral urges (Cornil & Chandon, 2016a, b). Food is also perceived as a guilty decadence reserved for special occasions separate from everyday life — and, in certain cultures, it is associated with a personal moral failing (Khan, Dhar, & Wertenbroch, 2005). Food pleasure, therefore, is cast as the antagonist to healthy food decisions.

An alternative view characterizes food pleasure as a positive pathway to well-being. This positioning asserts there are benefits to having greater self-awareness of pleasurable sensory and bodily states

during food experiences instead of focusing externally on avoiding perceived temptations (Petit et al., 2016). Indeed, in some European and Asian countries, food pleasure serves as a moral compass for guiding behavior; children are taught formally and informally this moral value through “the education of taste” (Miyoshi, Tsuboyama-Kasaoka, & Nishi, 2012; Reverdy, Chesnel, Schlich, Köster, & Lange, 2008). Moreover, adopting a cultivated approach to food pleasure is found to improve consumer health by encouraging reduced portion sizes and increasing enjoyment (Cornil & Chandon, 2016a, b; Macht, 1999). These intriguing findings suggest an opportunity to use food pleasure as a tool to reposition healthy eating and promote greater consumer well-being.

This article extends work on epicurean eating pleasure, EEP (Cornil & Chandon, 2016a, b) and food well-being, FWB (Block et al., 2011) by conceptualizing experiential pleasure of food (EPF) as a sustainable journey promoting the savoring of food practices and events in order to promote enduring health and well-being. The first section of this article illustrates the need for EPF considering the call for food-well being and the consideration of insights emerging from the epicurean eating pleasure perspective. The second section focuses on the definition of the EPF as a sustainable *journey* able to promote enduring healthy eating

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and food-well being. The final section provides a discussion of business implications and identifies opportunities for future research. By doing so, we seek to encourage marketers, public policymakers, and scholars to embrace the view of food pleasure that emerges within consumer experiences as a source of enduring well-being rather than as a deterrent.

2. Conceptual definition and distinctions of experiential pleasure of food (EPF)

We define the experiential pleasure of food (EPF) as the enduring cognitive (satisfaction) and emotional (i.e. delight) value consumers gain from savoring the multisensory, communal, and cultural meaning in food experiences. Food experiences involve the anticipation of food events and food practices, purchasing, consumption, and remembering (Arnould, Price, & Zinkhan, 2002). EPF encompasses the immediate food experience (similar to EEP) as well as the remembrance and expectation of savoring food. Similar to EEP, EPF is based on the experiential pleasure philosophy that savoring is fundamental to supporting positive associations and emotions involving food activities and can lead to greater consumer well-being (Jose, Lim, & Bryant, 2012). We use the conceptual definition of savoring promoted by Bryant and Veroff (2006, p. 2) as the capacities “to attend to, appreciate, and enhance the positive experiences in their lives.” Similar to this definition of savoring and the conceptualization of hedonic consumption (Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982), EPF extends beyond a simplified version of visceral or epicurean pleasure. Building on Cornil and Chandon’s works grounded in the idea of the aesthetic appreciation of the sensory and symbolic value of the food, EPF as integrated holistic food experience offers three novel aspects that were not considered in the Epicurean Eating Pleasure (EEP) approach. EPF is a scalable and transformative learning process that is co-constructed by considering the multiple experience drivers macro, meso, and micro factors related to different stages of the food pleasure construction process. EPF underscores the importance of an emic perspective that re-embeds consumer experience of food pleasure and well-being within a specific food culture and sub-culture (French food culture, Asian food culture, etc.) It also provides a distinction between pleasure as an outcome for enduring well-being and as a journey or a process that allows consumers to pursue their enhanced well-being.

EPF takes into account that food experiences—involving actions from production and distribution to eating and disposal—are embedded within a particular food culture and are shaped by this culture’s history, social norms, values, and beliefs. EPF influences the overall experience of savoring in terms of anticipation, degustation, and remembrance. EPF emphasizes the situatedness and enduring salience of the savoring experience in order to achieve food well-being, which we call the *EPF journey* (see Fig. 1). The journey incorporates three stages: contemplation (which culminates in anticipation), connection (which culminates

in degustation), and creation (which culminates in remembrance). Within these stages reside five principles (sensory, sharing, socio-cultural meaning, symbolism, and storytelling) that can be influenced to produce enduring satisfaction and delight.

2.1. Experiential pleasure philosophy: savoring food as art

In EPF, we conceptualize food as a form of art and artistic expression to be savored. The contemporary sociology of eating (Johnston & Baumann, 2007) has shown that any cuisine can create epicurean eating pleasure as long as it focuses on authenticity or identity (Cornil & Chandon, 2016a, b). Food, like art, is imbued with meaning by its creator through its sociocultural lens and as it is interpreted by the audience/consumer. In the experiential pleasure approach, food as art can create multiple perceived authenticities (Chronis & Hampton, 2008) that encompass five main aspects: object-related (food products and ingredients), factual (food narratives), locational (food embeddedness within a particular context or food culture), personage (skills and knowledge developed by the cooker), and contextual (social interactions and marketplace). Furthermore, EPF is also part of the vicarious experiential learning (Bandura, 1977) in which creativity, sophistication as well as imperfection through a trial and error food sense-making process is viewed as an artistic source that generates pleasure and well-being.

Food as art enables food to be recognized as an object of art (the final product and its presentation) and as a process of art (through its creation, preparation, and anticipation) culminating in a specific structure. In performance art, this takes the form of a musical score or choreography. With food, it is found in the recipe (Monroe, 2007). For both performing arts and food, the structure is pivotal for creating a narrative able to generate enduring delight.

Like art appreciation, *food as art* includes admiration of aesthetics and symbolism, and it extends to focus on the preparation of the product and the end product itself. Moreover, art can be striking and instantly memorable upon our first and only encounter with it, but we also become habituated to art we encounter every day. It is only when we pause, become mindful, or interact with the art in a different way that we come to delight in it again. Similar to the art experience, EPF emphasizes how the food interpretation is not mindless and accomplished in isolation: it takes on sociocultural, collective, and personal meanings. Like art, our pleasure with food can increase with experiences, knowledge, understanding, and mindfulness. Similar to EEP (Cornil & Chandon, 2016a, b), EPF involves the act of savoring through mindfulness of embodied behaviors, but also admiration of the performance, and the application of understanding and creativity with the purpose of consciously generating greater satisfaction and delight. In fact, EPF takes consumers beyond familiar meaningful cooking practices that can be mechanical or requiring skills by helping them develop their natural state of intrinsic wakefulness, harmony, and acquaintance.

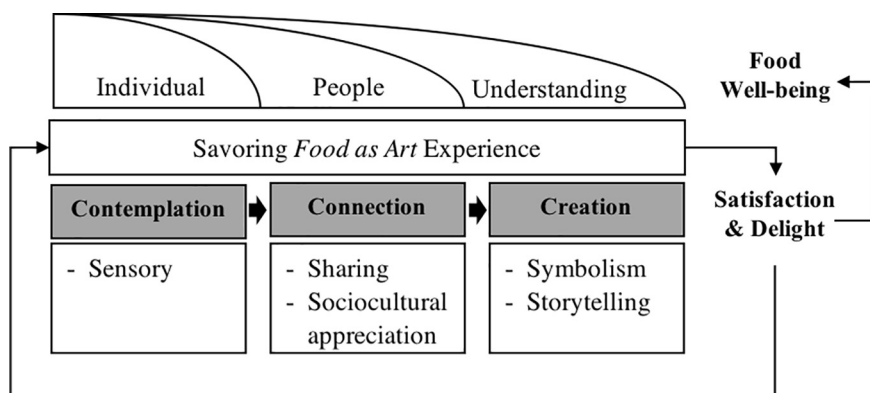


Fig. 1. The EPF journey.

EPF considers food as an intentional, transformative, and evolving experience that allows consumers to accumulate both knowledge and pleasure, rather than as an epicurean end in itself (Cornil & Chandon, 2016a, b).

2.2. EPF's relationship to food well-being and epicurean eating pleasure (EEP)

EPF particularly references two established works: Cornil and Chandon's Epicurean eating pleasure (Cornil & Chandon, 2016a, b) and Block et al.'s (2011) food well-being (FWB) paradigm. EPF distinguishes itself from EEP through its positioning within the food well-being (FWB) framework. EPF builds on EEP and contributes to FWB by focusing on the positive and enduring transformative food experience through savoring pleasure over time. If EEP suggests the focus is on the aesthetic dimensions of eating (e.g., by highlighting the novel aspect of the multisensory experience beyond just the taste valence or the rituals and symbols associated with the food), EPF focuses on the mindful and conscious recognition of food experiences as embedded in the socio-cultural, collective, and personal food meanings in order to achieve enduring FWB.

The FWB framework (Block et al., 2011) focuses on the positive consumer's personal and societal relationship with food over time. It highlights five domains that contribute to food well-being: socialization, literacy, marketing, policy, and availability. EPF capitalizes on EEP as “the enduring pleasure derived from the aesthetic appreciation of the sensory and symbolic value of food” (Cornil & Chandon, 2016a, p. 54) but uses the conceptualization of savoring *food as art* to foster a conscious and enduring appreciation of food in order to help institutions and consumers focus on the process of creating and maintaining food pleasure. The holistic perspective also helps identify and develop the sources of food pleasure within a certain food culture that can improve their food experiences, help them to develop and adopt sustainable healthy eating behaviors, and help them to achieve their overall food well-being. Similar to EEP, the EPF framework reconciles pleasure and health (two concepts that are often opposed) without giving up food, self-indulgence, or giving into the tyranny of permanent control and guilt by having to “relearn” how to eat by way of retrieving food self-meaning, creativity, and pleasure. Table 1 contrasts the EPF framework and its contribution to well-being with a “food is health” (pre-FWB) model of consumption.

EPF extends the well-established EEP perspective introduced by Cornil and Chandon's (2016a, b) which centers on how eating with a focus on multi-sensory aesthetics can influence consumers' subjective value of food and lead to well-being through enjoyment and moderation. EEP underlines the value of aesthetics as the appreciation of the multisensory nature of food that leads to pleasure. Although EEP touches upon food preparation through the mention of evaluating meaning including “the cultural and symbolic associations with the food, where and how it was made” and the scale item “cooking is a major form of art, similar to music or painting,” EEP does not explore these associations (Cornil & Chandon, 2016a, pp.54–55). Moreover, although

Table 1
The EPF framework and well-being.

Food as nutrient experience	Food as art experience
Mundane, dull	Savor
Personally detached	Personally involved
Restrained	Expressive
Indifference to process	Appreciation of process/production
Mindless	Intentional/mindful
Private	Audiences-focused/communal
Shared description (norm)	Shared understanding (norm)
Intake	Creative performance
Disconnected attributes	Narrative values

Table 2
Epicurean eating pleasure (EEP) vs. experiential pleasure of food (EPF).

Epicurean eating pleasure (EEP)	Experiential pleasure of food (EPF)
Goal oriented	Process oriented
Pleasure	Delight
Micro perspective (individual)	Macro perspective (society, culture)
Define	Empower
Improved well-being	Enduring well-being
Epicurean tendencies	Integrated holistic food experience
Aesthetic appreciation	All-inclusive appreciation
Disembeddedness	Embeddedness
Etic approach	Emic approach
Static	Scalable
Single authenticity	Multiple authenticities
Single driver experience	Several driver experience
Consistent	Transformative

mindfulness is important for EEP, there is less discussion of how individuals develop an appreciation of food production, preparation, and sharing.

By adopting the EPF perspective, we broaden EEP's focus of aesthetic appreciation to include the enduring savoring *food as art* experience. This perspective differentiates EEP from EPF by emphasizing the tacit and explicit associations that characterize EPF as a distinct construct from EEP (Table 2). Rather than regarding food solely as a survival mechanism and as immediate pleasure, consumers who consciously develop an EPF perspective view food as an artistic experience to be savored and shared whenever possible. They see eating as a transformative and evolving experience that allows them to accumulate both knowledge and pleasure in order to achieve food well-being.

3. The EPF journey

The experiential pleasure of food (EPF) is multifaceted and considers how pleasure contributes to food-well being (FWB) in the entire process of anticipation, purchase, consumption, and remembrance of food experiences. EPF requires praxis, combining action and reflection to gain its benefits. It requires the identification of key principles that can enhance EPF and help consumers identify and develop the sources of pleasures that lead them to achieve their food well-being goals.

To forge EPF and its enduring savoring philosophy, we propose the framework of the *EPF journey* (see Fig. 1), a process to exploit the interconnectivity that includes three domains: Contemplation, Connection, and Creation. The *EPF journey* offers an evolving and iterative vision of food pleasure and enriches its definition by focusing on the subjectivization, externalization, and embeddedness of pleasure within a particular food culture and one's personal food story and history. These phases are critical to the identification of the sources of EPF that lead to food well-being throughout the consumer experiential journey that goes from individual and people perceptions to cultural conceptions. Each stage in the EPF journey encompasses principles or influences that characterize the EPF and can influence healthy eating and consumer well-being.

We define and explain each stage in the food experiential journey and its related domains in the sections that follow. These domains will help scholars, marketers, and policymakers develop new educational programs and marketing actions based on the promotion of healthy eating by considering one or several key principles of EPF. The journey is meant to help consumers, marketers, and policymakers identify areas for creating positive change in order to induce more sustained and healthy eating in the population.

3.1. Contemplation stage: food sensory

The contemplation stage involves the internal and external sensations experienced by the individual and how mindfulness and creativity

can be used to heighten savoring. Pleasurable food experiences are evoked from multi-sensory experiences (i.e. what we see, hear, smell, touch, and taste). Emotional reactions to food, including pleasure, can be elicited through sensory properties (Spence, 2017). Although taste is paramount to food pleasure, what constitutes a pleasurable taste experience—leading to food preferences, quantity consumed, and ingestion experience—is far from simple gustation (Hoegg & Alba, 2007; Mela, 2006). Before ingesting food, we access learned expectations through visual, scent, sound, and tactile cues that cause us to predict tastes and subsequent liking (Spence, 2017).

Research has demonstrated the role of descriptive labeling (Irmak, Vallen, & Robinson, 2011), smell (e.g., Krishna, Morrin, & Sayin, 2014), and color (Zhang, Wadhwa, & Chattopadhyay, 2016) on food pleasure perception and how a more artistically plated meal tastes better than its more traditionally plated counterpart (Zellner, Loss, Zearfoss, & Remolina, 2014). Pleasure can also be framed by marketers, particularly in the area of nutrition. Nutrition and nutrition labeling has been addressed in the literature as an important food marketing domain for decades (Balasubramanian & Cole, 2002; Burton, Howlett, & Tangari, 2009; Jacoby, Chestnut, & Silberman, 1977; Moorman, 1996). Despite few studies that suggest that nutrition labeling can lead to beneficial health outcomes (Variyam & Cawley, 2006), nutritional labeling alone has resulted in mixed overall outcomes (e.g., Burton, Creyer, Kees, & Huggins, 2006). Importantly, consumers rate pleasurableness in the form of taste as more important than nutrition information. O'Dougherty et al. (2006) state that 96% of sampled consumers rate taste as very important in comparison to just 58% that rate nutrition as being very important. The element of pleasure may be more important than the posting of nutrition information.

Understanding emotions, including pleasure, can enhance an understanding of consumer behavior (Alba & Hutchinson, 1987; Batra & Ahtola, 1991) and nutritional policies (Jacquier, Bonthoux, Baciù, & Ruffieux, 2012). Tactics underlie appropriate responses to heighten pleasurable food experiences. Research suggests that visual food cues are the most prominent (Posner, Nissen, & Klein, 1976) but other food cues are also important. Certain words, such as “flower,” boost olfactory regions of the brain. Even labeling clean air as “cheddar cheese” made the odor seem more pleasant to individuals (de Araujo, Rolls, Velasco, Margot, & Cayeux, 2005). According to recent literature, a crisp, crunch sound makes potato chips and similar crunch-expecting products more pleasant (Elder & Mohr, 2016). Lastly, in an experiment manipulating food visual cues, pricing, and brand information, Hoegg and Alba (2007) found that the manipulation of visual food cues was more salient to consumers than the manipulation of pricing or brand. Sensory food experiences can be manipulated to create more pleasant food experiences for consumers. Therefore, EPF calls for the realization that pleasure is embedded in the multisensory experience of food. Consistent with *food is art* experience, scholars have found parallels between what makes food arrangements and other visual art forms aesthetically pleasing and enticing (Carafoli, 2003). For example, diners are willing to pay more for an appetizer if it was presented in the center of a plate (balanced) versus if the food was placed off-center (unbalanced; Michel, Velasco, Fraemohs, & Spence, 2015) and food presented in a neat manner was rated as tasting better than food presented in a messy manner (Zellner et al., 2014).

At the end of June 2018, there were over 281 million posts on Instagram with the hashtag “food” (www.instagram.com, retrieved on June 25, 2018), suggesting the pleasure consumers take in the aesthetic appeal of their food. Simply pausing to take a photo of one's food might increase savoring behavior (Coary & Poor, 2016). Marketing and public policy researchers may wish to investigate whether enhancing the visual aesthetics of food alone can slow down eating, encourage mindful consumption, and increase savoring. If consumers are more motivated to share something beautiful with loved ones, visual aesthetics may also contribute to the desire to make the consumption experience a social one (not only online but also in person) and thus increase food-sharing

and community-building.

3.2. Connection stage: sociocultural appreciation and food-sharing

The connection stage focuses on social context and relationships through which individuals interpret pleasure. Foods and their consumption are part of the cultural material that repeatedly constructs one's cultural identity (Mintz, 1996). As the adage attributed to culinary essayist Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin declares, “tell me what you eat, and I will tell you who you are” ([1825] 2009, p. 15). The embeddedness of culture and identity in food provides opportunities to enhance experiential pleasure through the reinforcement of one's own positive cultural identity and the celebration of cultural diversity.

As highlighted in the FWB framework (Block et al., 2011), socialization is critical to learning about the values, norms, and attitudes of our own culture (Rozin & Fallon, 1987). Through explicit and implicit cultural learning, individuals acquire taste preferences and positive or negative associations with food that shape their cultural identities and by extension, their experiential pleasure of food. Research indicates that individuals use the food consumption practices of others to guide their own behavior on what and how much they eat (Cruwys, Bevelander, & Hermans, 2015). Additionally, modeling is found to help reduce food neophobia—the tendency to reject new foods—and increase the enjoyment of healthier foods (Cruwys et al., 2015). By exploring the sociocultural meaning of food and food practices, we begin to understand how to best position taste education that will resonate with individuals, excite pleasure, and increase enduring positive associations with food well-being.

In comparing American and French attitudes toward food, Rozin, Remick, and Fischler (2011) find great preference toward personal food values (measured as variety), abundance, and comfort among Americans versus communal food values, moderation, and joy among the French. Exploring the cultural meaning behind these differences can offer opportunities to better position food norms and rituals to support greater well-being. For example, although greater variety may be viewed as negative, altering the focus on variety to a focus on diversity and communal experience could prove useful in creating quality food, honoring culture, and exploring culinary boundaries through fusion foods.

Through its social engagement, sharing provides an opportunity to reinforce values and norms and strengthen communal ties, such as intimacy (Miller, Rozin, & Fiske, 1998). For example, participation in a shared community garden allows for the dissemination of healthy recipes, tips on growing, preparing, and storing vegetables, and the exchange of healthy foods among the community (Teig et al., 2009). Two domains of sharing offer particular insight into enhancing the pleasurable experience of food: commensality and collaborative consumption. Commensality refers to the practice of eating together. Commensality is viewed across cultures as essential to family identity and unity (Ochs & Shohet, 2006). Belasco (2008) uses the folklore fable of “stone soup” (p.19) in which a soldier (according to the French version of the tale) misleads the town folk into providing additional ingredients to the soup pot after which a feast is created and shared by the town. The fable's intent is to illustrate food-sharing's “almost magical properties in its ability to turn self-seeking individuals into a collaborative group.” Collaborative consumption in terms of coordination of distribution and possession of resources for a fee or other compensation (Belk, 2014) underscores the benefits of a community-supported agriculture. For example, “Private Kitchen” offers consumers the opportunity to purchase meals prepared in home kitchens. Several are the example of technology-related outlines domains of food-sharing and collaborative consumption which are sites for building social connections and exploration of experiential consumption (Table 3).

Food-sharing influences EPF and contributes to consumer well-being by means of the social engagement it requires. Sharing food provides opportunities to reinforce values and norms and to strengthen

Table 3
Sharing and collaborative consumption platforms and communities.

Platforms/communities	Authors	Descriptions
Food sharing apps/websites	Danovich (2016) Kessler (2016)	Food sharing apps highlight various motivations for participating in their collaborative consumption: supporting family values through offering local, home cooked meals; providing unique culinary experiences, including authentic dining experiences for travelers; and contributing to food waste reduction. This marketplace disruption is still in its infancy and has yet to create clear frontrunners. Food health and safety regulations is a battleground for these services. Sites include: Feastly, BonAppetour, EatWith, and Josephine.
Foraging	Hall (2013)	Foraging as an ancient practice of gathering edible plants, berries, and fungi, connects individuals to their food sources in an intimate matter. Foraging practices have significant cultural meaning in many parts of the world. In Sweden and Finland, foraging is connected to the freedom to roam or 'everyman's right' (allemansträtten Swedish; jokamiehenoikeus Finnish). Research indicates foraging connects groups to cultural heritage, strengthening identity and social contact.
Recipe traditions, cooking communities and blogs	Meyers (2001)	Sharing of recipes reinforces personal bonds. Online cooking communities and blogs provide affiliation and engagement in developing cooking skills and expanding palates.
Community and school gardens	Teig et al. (2009) Parmer, Salisbury-Glennon, Shannon, and Struempler (2009) Goodman and Goodman (2007)	Community gardens are show to support collective efficacy and promote healthier food consumption. School gardens are found to increase fruit and vegetable knowledge and taste ratings among children.
Alternative food networks	Barnett, Dripps, and Blomquist (2016)	Alternative food networks are connections between consumers and food suppliers that are outside the conventional system and notably focus on niche markets including organics, artisan, and dietary restrictions [e.g. vegetarian, gluten-free]. These networks are primarily associated with an ecological and ethical consciousness is found to promote enjoying food and cultivate an appreciation for the food consumed.

communal ties, such as intimacy (Miller et al., 1998). Children and adolescents are more likely to have healthier dietary and eating patterns when they share family meals three or more times per week (Hammons & Fiese, 2011). Surprisingly, food-sharing has not been directly addressed within the marketing and public policy literature. Sociocultural appreciation deserves additional attention because of its potential to promote exposure to and positive associations with healthy foods as well as encouraging pride in communal and cultural identities.

3.3. Creation stage: food symbolism and storytelling

The creation stage helps bridge the individual and others by reinforcing bonds and offering means for understanding. Food symbolism extends to all food practices, including ceremonial preparation of Sicilian *cuscuszu* (Cicala, 1995), aesthetic presentation in bento boxes for Japanese school children (Allison, 1991), and structuralization of meals, such as the eating of biscuits by working-class British (Douglas & Nicod, 1974). The symbolism of food and food practices assist in reinforcing shared cultural, social, and religious identities. Indeed, although we may cease using the language, furnishings, clothing, and other traditions associated with our cultural heritage, food traditions continue long after these other practices and artifacts recede from our lives (Di Giovine & Brulotte, 2016). Food can also be a symbolic site for gender roles, influencing perceptions of food. For example, cooking, in general, is traditionally associated more with the interior world of the home (female sphere) rather than the exterior worlds of work, such as the market and the grill (male sphere) (Belk, 2010). Yet these roles evolve over time, as is the case for men who are increasingly taking on a greater share of domestic cooking responsibilities (Neuman, Gottzén, & Fjellström, 2017; Szabo, 2014). New offerings in the market are also emerging, such as the Meal-kit company Blue Apron, which has touted their product and cooking as a way to strengthen relationships in the modern home (Premack, 2016).

Embedded in food symbolism is food storytelling as a memory-laden experience. When telling stories about food experiences, the storyteller uses experiential signs, wording, and symbolism that signal community and comfort. Food storytelling contributes to consumer well-being by strengthening social connections in the maintenance of cherished rituals, the sharing of sensory ingredients, and the preservation of established traditions. These elements ultimately lead to the continuation of society's food culture (e.g., Bublitz et al., 2013; Wallendorf & Arnould, 1991). Embedded in food storytelling is food nostalgia, which

evokes memory-laden experiences. Memory stands as the most principal factor in how we learn to eat (Wilson, 2015). What and how we eat shapes the meaning of our lives so much that memories of the food and our eating experiences become central to how we remember our past experiences (Moulton & Kosslyn, 2009). Having a flavor profile stored in memory is enough to re-activate it in the brain and cause the consumer to experience the associated pleasure (Pelchat, Johnson, Chan, Valdez, & Ragland, 2004). Because words and categories link to these memories, the semantic meanings impact our responses to food. Children embed memories of food and family while enjoying traditional cuisines and cultural gatherings (Sutton, 2001). Even if food consumed as a child may not taste better than the same food as an adult, longings can enhance it. For example, as adults, we can acknowledge the subpar taste of junk food like a Twinkie, yet the nostalgia for simpler, familial and familiar times makes the Twinkie a pervasive symbol of our childhood and influences our better judgment. Unfortunately, as the Twinkie can testify, nostalgic comfort foods developed in childhood are traditionally unhealthy, having a distinct disassociation with adulthood (Elliott, 2009). If food nostalgia is to promote healthier eating choices in adulthood, it is important to build associations between healthy food and positive social and cultural events in childhood. Moreover, connecting these events with healthy "kids only" treats can reduce the perceived associations with adults and help solidify subsequent healthy food memories.

As a key element in our EPF framework, food symbolism and food storytelling not only change the meanings we attach to food and cooking, they ultimately change behaviors and have the potential to impact consumer outcomes. From a policy perspective, that affords us a powerful tool to improve long-term well-being. Whereas health information has the validity to improve human outcomes, it can also prove ineffective when consumers want to be rebels and not listen: think of a teenager who hears a parent warn of the dangers of smoking. Healthy messaging can lower the enjoyment and therefore decrease the choice of healthy foods (Raghunathan et al., 2006). By focusing on the experiential pleasure of food, we cast aside any reactance or rebelliousness on what consumers ought to do. Instead, we use food symbolism and storytelling in the EPF framework to give consumers the enjoyment they want by showing how that enjoyment is crafted.

4. Discussion

Identification of the stages of the EPF consumer journey through

3Cs (Contemplation, Connection, and Creation) and its principles (food sensory, sociocultural appreciation, and sharing, as well as food symbolism and storytelling) offer a new approach to investigating how pleasure can shape food practices and events, and consequently food well-being. The philosophy of savoring *food as art* might suggest the need to develop a certain expertise and a discriminating palate to truly experience EPF. This is hardly readily available to the majority of people, as Bourdieu (1984) suggests in his association with taste and social capital. We put forth a more democratized experiential pleasure philosophy by advancing the belief that savoring is accessible to any individual willing to reflect on the EPF journey. Indeed, each production, eating experience, and disposal occasion brings with it the culmination of meaning from the past (sociocultural appreciation, storytelling, symbolism); the present (sensory and sharing); and anticipation (all factors) that create opportunities to savor food for its qualities and meaning, not its quantities.

It is evident throughout the discussion of EPF influences, that children are an important focus for creating pleasurable and healthy food experiences. Programs that help families, schools, and communities create more food-sharing, stories, and practices can help solidify a healthier relationship with food throughout a lifetime (Ainuki, Akamatsu, Hayashi, & Takemi, 2013). Experiential pleasure of food can help policymakers develop training programs in taste education that focus on celebrating food throughout its process, from its production to its disposal. In many regards, what former first lady Michelle Obama initiated with the White House garden; that is, the celebration of vegetables and the appreciation of gardening, represents ideals core to EPF (Belluz, 2016). With respect to the White House garden—and community and school gardening programs that promote the enjoyment of gardening and the fruits (and vegetables) of one's labor—experiential pleasure is achieved in a way that ultimately has positive health benefits without emphasizing the outcomes. That is how food storytelling and food symbolism together can form positive memories and associations with great societal benefit. No doubt many school lunch programs enacted in the U.S. emphasize health and can enhance health outcomes. However, our model of EPF would emphasize creating enjoyable and holistic eating experiences for children so that they naturally develop preferences for healthy food options, which would have lasting long-term benefits versus short-term benefits of making children eat healthy while under school supervision.

4.1. Managerial implications

Businesses looking to reach consumers within the food and restaurant industries have the opportunity to develop innovative ways of enhancing EPF for consumers to increase consumer satisfaction, delight, loyalty, and well-being. In exploring what is driving growth in the food industry, the Hartman Group recently discussed the “new pleasure paradigm” of food consumers. The consulting firm related how consumers are seeking indulgence as a positive, worthwhile experience, rather than a guilty, forbidden treat (Watrous, 2017). Consumers want products with positive attributes for themselves (e.g., tasty and organic) and for the world (e.g., donating food to reduce food waste). Such messaging echoes experiential pleasure philosophy and supports the use of the *EPF journey* in helping to develop successful food products, food-related services, and tools that will have high consumer acceptance.

Sensory marketing has long been leveraged by marketers to attract consumers—and marketing has a valuable role to play in promoting liking (hedonic drive) and wanting (consumption motivation) of healthy foods (Yang et al., 2012). Using sensory and storytelling to promote EPF, marketers can capitalize on the natural vibrancy and beauty of fruits, vegetables, and other healthy foods to create positive and fun messaging around these choices. Successful examples of campaigns based on these principles include the US National Institute of Health (2013) encouraging children to “Eat the Rainbow” in order to consume diverse nutrients and for parents to engage in fun food

activities, such as making a rainbow salad with their children. Similarly, Bolthouse Farms' “Eat 'Em Like Junk Food” marketing campaign brought baby carrots to the limelight not by touting the health benefits of carrots over junk food, but by embracing the multisensory pleasure of what makes junk food appealing. The neon orange color, crispy and crunchy feel, and crinkly sound of packaging that mimicked the aesthetics of traditional junk food brands successfully reversed declines in category sales (McGray, 2011).

Within the travel industry, trips offering experiences in sharing, sociocultural appreciation, storytelling, and symbolism can enhance the attractiveness of gourmet tourism destinations and support the training of local producers in creating food experiences that promote their local, healthy products. In addition, cooking schools have great future potential for clients who are keen on culinary holidays and training in food gastronomy, local products, and the arts of tableware. Moreover, collaborative food consumption—in the forms of community supported agriculture, community gardens, foraging, and food-sharing apps—contributes to the growing interest in shared economy (Belk, 2014). In terms of marketing implications, food-sharing has become commoditized within the sharing economy, allowing for innovative services and goods to expose and connect individuals to new (or old) food activities, including foraging, homemade meal delivery, and authentic dining experiences for travelers.

4.2. Limitations and future research directions

The EPF, its savoring philosophy, and its journey offer opportunities for additional research. Cross-cultural and different socio-demographic investigations can further illuminate the sources of experiential pleasure's connections to supporting well-being. Moreover, further research can explore the connection between EPF—based on subjective, hedonic well-being—and Eudaimonic well-being to enhance consumers' positive relationship with food. Eudaimonic well-being is considered psychological well-being related to personal growth and purpose (Keyes, Shmotkin, & Ryff, 2002). There are many opportunities to explore how these two types of well-being may support each other through savoring experience and the strengthening of healthy outcomes.

Considering the different principles of the EPF process, future research should examine whether mindful awareness of sensory cues decreases the extent to which these cues influence taste perceptions and potentially, the willingness to try new foods. Scholars can examine whether communal eaters feel more connected to each other because they are sharing a positive experience of enjoying the beauty of their food (Raghunathan & Corfman, 2006), which can also have implications for family bonding and food socialization. Moreover, future researchers may want to examine how everyday conversations about food with family members and peers (Peter, Batat, & Ulusoy, 2016) interactively impact an individual's food well-being (Wymer, 2010).

Humans are social creatures and our desires for “community, pleasure, comfort, and kinship” (Block et al., 2011, p. 6) are illustrated in the affinity produced through food sociocultural appreciation, sharing, storytelling, and symbolism. Within these social activities, it is valuable to take into account sensory cues to produce pleasurable and healthy associations. Scholars interested in transformative consumer researcher (TCR) are particularly well-suited to conducting research that can inform public policy, as well as food businesses and customers, on how EPF factors affect eating behaviors and how healthy eating approaches can be tailored to consider psychological, social, biological, and contextual drivers. The ability of TCR researchers to understand and communicate with each of these stakeholder groups is unique and valuable when contributing to the conversation on food well-being. EPF supports pivoting away from associations of immorality and personal defect—which persist in American-dominated food indulgence and obesity discourses—to regarding food pleasure as an ally of consumer well-being. Through understanding the principles of EPF and challenging researchers, policymakers, and practitioners to apply this

knowledge, opportunities abound for the creation of more pleasurable food experiences in comparison to less beneficial, voluminous food experiences.

It may appear from this discussion that experiential pleasure of food is only reserved for those who are predisposed to Epicurean pleasure and those who have the financial means. While access barriers need to be taken into consideration, Epicurean pleasure is found to be independent of income (Cornil & Chandon, 2016a), and experiential pleasure is found to be valued across incomes levels (Frey & Stutzer, 2010). Two considerable barriers to increasing pleasurable experience around food would be time and money. From an individual consumer perspective, time is necessary to become educated on multisensory and cultural meaning, conduct research, seek out and produce ingredients, and prepare a meal. Money is necessary to purchase ingredients, have the tools (e.g., knives, pans, stove) to create the meal, dine at a restaurant, and participate in social food events. Alkon et al. (2013) find that price, not lack of knowledge or distance from food stores, is the primary barrier to healthy food access.

Without solutions to reduce time and money as obstacles—focusing on creating change in a sociocultural context would be ineffective. While this suggests policymakers need to prioritize and commit adequate funding and resources to create consumer-centered educational programs, it also offers opportunities for businesses and organizations to take the *EPF journey* approach to create products and experiences that efficiently reduce resource requirements. What is critical is to provide support through education, space, and community to allow for individuals to experience savoring. A particularly inspired operation is chef Massimo Bottura's "Food for Soul" (foodforsoul.it). The organization operates *Refettorio* community kitchens dedicated to serving socially vulnerable populations with the mission of empowering communities to act for change through social inclusion and the transformation of food surplus and neglected spaces. The organization upholds three core principles "Quality of Ideas, Power of Beauty, and Value of Hospitality" (foodforsoul.it/about-us/our-approach/) and is based philosophically on the idea that all individuals, no matter their social and financial means, desire pleasurable food experiences.

We contend food and pleasure are not the enemies to health and well-being. Through mindfulness, the appreciation of sensory information and shared meaning, and the promotion of positive sociocultural identities, the *EPF journey* allows consumers to increase savoring and, in turn, satisfaction and delight. Practitioners, policymakers, and scholars are encouraged to focus on the positive and promote savoring pleasure in food experiences.

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